Ford Creates First Silicon Valley Presence with New Research Lab to Drive Innovation in Personal Mobility

- Ford Motor Company will create and open a new research lab in Silicon Valley early this year – its first-ever dedicated R&D office on the west coast
- New lab will support Ford's vision that its future is not just about building cars but about creating uncompromised personal mobility experiences for people around the world
- Lab will be a hub for Ford to develop a wide spectrum of partnerships with established and startup tech firms and with universities in the area, such as Stanford

Infographic: Ford's West Coast Innovation Network

Ford plans to open its first Silicon Valley-based Research Lab to scout new technology and find new partners to innovate personal mobility solutions for the future. Click here to download related images.

DEARBORN, Mich., Jan. 6, 2012 – Ford Motor Company today announced plans to create and open its first dedicated research lab in Silicon Valley early this year, further growing the company's commitment to make technology affordable for millions.

"Ford has an incredible heritage of driving innovation in the transportation and manufacturing sectors during the past 107 years," said Paul Mascarenas, Ford chief technical officer and vice president of Research and Innovation. "Now it's time to prepare for the next 100 years, ushering in a new era of collaboration and finding new partners to help us transform what it means to be an automaker."

Ford President and CEO Alan Mulally will elaborate on the new areas of focus for the forthcoming Silicon Valley lab, plus Ford's latest industry-leading technologies including SYNC®, EcoBoost™, MyKey® and inflatable rear safety belts, when he returns to the International CES on Jan. 11 for the Innovation Power Panel keynote. This will be Ford's fourth consecutive keynote presentation at CES.

Ford Research and Innovation, the company's advanced engineering arm, will open the new Silicon Valley lab in the first quarter, helping ensure Ford keeps pace with consumer trends and aggressively prepares for the future by developing mobility solutions to harness the power of seamless connectivity, cloud computing and clean technology.

"An open attitude to new ideas is critical to solving the transportation, environmental and societal challenges we expect in the future," said Mascarenas. "With increasing pressures from urbanization and the need to reduce energy use, we're going to see energy storage, wireless connectivity, sensing systems and even autonomous vehicles as key parts of the solution."

The new Ford lab will be located in the San Francisco Bay area of California and will serve as a hub for independent technology projects and identification of new research investments and partners located along the west coast. Ultimately, the lab will create an "innovation network" connecting Ford's Advanced Design Studio in Irvine, Calif., and Ford employees working with connectivity platform partner Microsoft Corp. in Redmond, Wash.

"Silicon Valley represents a deep and dynamic technology neighborhood and is far from Dearborn," said K. Venkatesh Prasad, senior technical leader for open innovation with Ford Research and

Innovation. “With so many opportunities and so much potential, our new lab will allow us to scout new technologies and partners in their own environment and continue our expansion beyond the traditional automaker mindset to drive innovation for a better mobility experience.”

Prasad – a Silicon Valley veteran himself – will travel from Dearborn to the Bay area regularly to shape the lab. The new research lab’s employees will be recruited both locally and rotated-in from the global network of Ford employees and will spend their time developing and discovering new technologies, trends, partners and collaborative research projects, said Prasad.

The number of Ford employees at its new lab will be comparable to what you expect of a startup, with an emphasis on quality over quantity, said Prasad.

Prasad added that the establishment of Ford’s all-new Silicon Valley lab will not duplicate or replace work being done at the company’s Research and Innovation Center in Dearborn, its European facility in Aachen, Germany, or the recently established technology office in Nanjing, China.

Ford’s global Research and Innovation team is already working in several key areas that will be supported by the work of the Silicon Valley lab including:

- Personal mobility: Mindful of consumer trends and the growth of megacities, Ford is researching new business models that will help avoid the creation of global gridlock through a holistic approach to personal transportation
- Open-source hardware and software developer kits: Working with New York City-based startup Bug Labs, Ford is launching OpenXC, a research platform that will allow developers to access key vehicle data in order to innovate cloud-based apps and services. The first OpenXC beta developer kits will be shipped this month to several participating universities including MIT, University of Michigan and Stanford
- The car as a sensor: Researching ways to utilize the multitude of sensors within the vehicle to improve the road for all drivers, Ford is opening the data channels to developers. For example, San Francisco-based Weather Underground is looking at ways to leverage vehicle windshield wiper activations to improve its weather proximity reporting

“Ford integrates technologies, software and electronics at the same pace as the most innovative companies in the world – our platform just happens to be the car,” said Mascarenas. “The new Silicon Valley lab will propel us further as we look at the many facets of life where mobility interacts with society and see how we can make those experiences better for millions of customers around the world.”

# # #

About Ford Motor Company

Ford Motor Company, a global automotive industry leader based in Dearborn, Mich., manufactures or distributes automobiles across six continents. With about 166,000 employees and about 70 plants worldwide, the company’s automotive brands include Ford and Lincoln. The company provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company. For more information regarding Ford and its products worldwide, please visithttp://corporate.ford.com.